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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the changes in American society which are initiating the need to develop programs aimed at new audiences with diverse needs and interests. The reaction of continuing education units to these needs is discussed and the importance of an interdisciplinary approach is emphasized. The authors describe their use of the Education Marketing Mix Model in defining and reaching four specific audiences -- (1) students; (2) educators; (3) practitioners; and (4) older adults -- for a gerontology-related programming campaign. Included is a discussion of the rationale for strategic outreach, an analysis of relevant networks, a description of the model, and a selective bibliography. (Author/JAC)

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USING INTERDISCIPLINARY NETWORKS TO REACH NEW AUDIENCES THROUGH STRATEGIC OUTREACH

A Workshop Presentation for the Western Gerontological Society, 28 th Annual Meeting, San Diego, California: March 2, 1982.

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Using Interdisciplinary Networks to Reach New Audiences Through Strategic Outreach

Program developers working in the area of continuing higher education are constantly looking for new audiences or, more pragmatically, new markets to serve. Recent declines in the perceived value of investments in higher education, the aging of the post-war "baby boom" generation and decreases in funding from both public and private sources are all well documented motivations for this search. (9:1-13)

In reaching beyond traditional markets, program developers have explored both younger and older audiences. Many continuing education catalogs and brochures now promote programs for elementary school students as well as camps for extramural activities and a host of courses of every description to supplement middle and high school curricula. At the other end of the spectrum, more and more adult educators are looking at the older adult audience. (7:)

The older adult, by virtue of longer life span, higher income and an increasing level of education is rapidly becoming a very attractive new audience and, one that has been largely ignored by continuing education units in the past. Additionally, there appears to be an opportunity for a natural melding of higher education programming and the needs and interests of older populations. (13:52-53).

Howard McClusky tells us that ... "by the year 2000, the fields of both adult education and gerontology will be experiencing a stage of dynamic

development." Adult education will move from the periphery to the center of educational activity and older adults will be in a better position to claim their share of education. He lists four major causes:

1. The schedules of older adults will contain more "discretionary time.". (Some of which may be devoted to educational activities).

2. Continuing education will become increasingly important as a component of both careers and jobs. (Witness the increasingly stringent recertification requirements of many occupations).

3. Higher levels of formal education attainment increase the likelihood that a person will return to further education later in life. A few years ago, the average educational level was 9th grade; in 1976, the average was the 12th grade; by the year 2000, the average will be the 14th grade. (This means an increasing demand for higher levels of education, often later in life).

4. Society is finally realizing that some of the most significant learning of a lifetime can occur in the later years. (11:170-171)

Add to the above trends, a record target "market" of from 35-40 million adults, (55-65 years of age) by the year 2000, and motivation for continuing education units to market programs to and about the older adult becomes even greater. These factors combined to lead the authors to the development and adaptation of the described model which may be applicable to interdisciplinary replication.

Continuing Education programmers are often in a position similar to human service professionals who are caught in the middle between the clients to be served and the administrators

to whom they are responsible.

Under ideal conditions:

1. Administrators provide the authority and designate the responsibility to develop a wide range of attractive and effective programs and services for the groups to be served.
2. Program developers assess the needs of the target populations and communicate these to the service providers.
3. Service providers design and deliver the program or service.
4. The final program or service is delivered to the satisfaction of program developers, service providers, clients and administrators. (4:237)

The word "ideal" is stressed because, far too often, the program or service either is not delivered or is delivered at a less than satisfactory level due to incorrect assumptions or differing client expectations.

Although most program developers and service providers understand the responsibilities of their tasks, few have a workable framework to fulfill these responsibilities with consistent success. (14:6) In developing the Educational Marketing Mix Model described below, the authors drew upon the traditional "5-P's" of the Commercial Marketing Mix-- product, packaging, promotion, price and place. To these was added a sixth significant factor-- scheduling. The promotion component deserves special attention by service providers wishing to build networks and to access new audiences and will be the major focus of discussion for the balance of this paper.

The example discussed to illustrate the use of the model is a credit-option program offering at the University of Arizona, originally titled-- Rehabilitation of the Elderly, later more attractively titled-- Innovative

Approaches to serving the Aging.

The program developer targeted four major markets or potential audiences for this offering:

1. Students
2. Teachers
3. Professionals in Gerontology
4. Interested "others" or the older adults themselves.

In an effort to determine if this or any other product or service was appropriate to each of the target markets, the program developer reviewed four basic elements:

1. Pre-existing knowledge of each of the above market segments.
2. Needs or wants expressed previously on questionnaires, surveys, evaluations or by advisory boards.
3. Programs successfully conducted elsewhere that appeared "portable".
4. Contemporary trends, fads, fears and lifestyle changes.

The results of this preassessment were then applied to each market segment in terms of developing the product, packaging, promotion (among the existing and potential networks), place, price and scheduling. Emphasis was upon generating maximum appeal for each segment or audience. (These Variables and the strategies that developed for each are listed on the Worksheet appended to this article and are discussed in full in reference # 6). (6:29-30).

promotion. It is here where the interdisciplinary networks become prominent in the overall outreach effort associated with the campaign strategy. Each target audience has some form of either formal or informal network which can be appealed to and utilized for greater outreach activity.

In the case of the student audience, it was determined that the campus newspaper and in-class announcements by interested faculty members would be the most effective networks. Teachers, on the other hand, could be most effectively reached through their professional association's newsletters and membership endorsements. The gerontology professionals were also regularly in contact with cohorts through newsletters, meetings, employers and day-to-day contact. State licensing authorities also provided help in calling attention to relicensure requirements and a convenient method of fulfilling these requirements. Perhaps the most difficult networks to define, largely because of the diversity of their members were the "others" and the seniors themselves. Upon investigation, it was determined that although special interest groups did exist, the most reliable "network" was the print and electronic media. Public service announcements, "community calendars" and information and referral services were used by this diverse audience as a series of networks and were utilized as such in program promotion.

By defining the appropriate networks in each specific market segment, the program developer was able to target accurate and unique appeals through the appropriate channels of communication. A sort of "geometric progression" took place where identified networks interacted with previously hidden networks who, in turn, interacted with other known and unknown groups. Through this cross-fertilization of networks, an untested program offering success-

fully met the needs and expectations of a varied and diverse group of participants. More important, however, than any single success, are the lessons learned in developing a strategy to utilize seemingly unrelated, existing networks for outreach.

1. Of the six elements that comprise the educational marketing mix, promotion, through interdisciplinary networks, may be the most important in terms of the ultimate success of the effort.

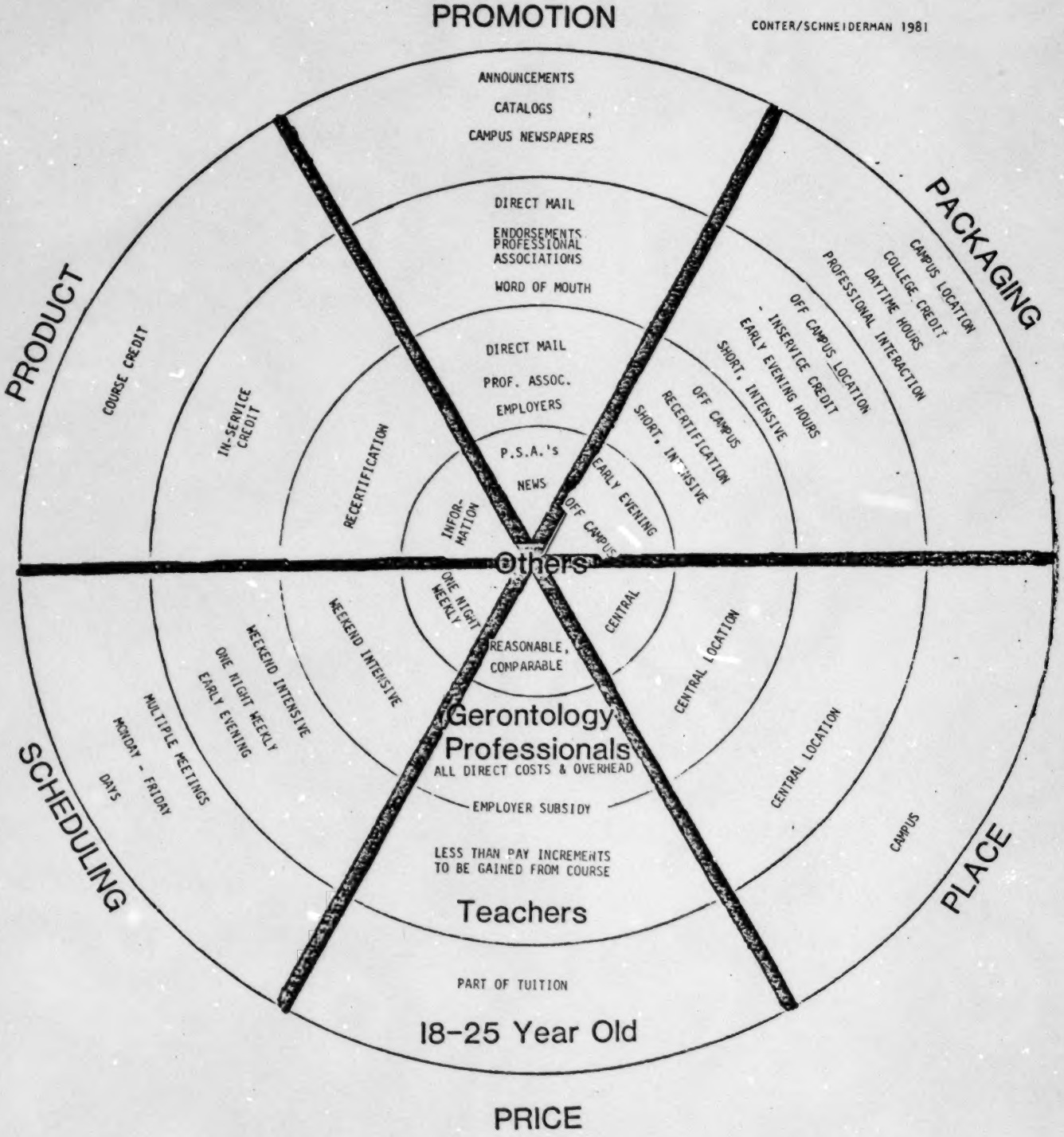
2. No matter how diverse, unrelated or obscure they may seem, specific market segments form networks. There is usually a minimum number of potential networks at least equal to the number of target audiences available to assist in promotion and support of an effort.

3. Identification of these networks requires careful assessment of the specific market segments.

4. Once identified, these networks can be used repeatedly to further identify and build other networks for future outreach efforts.

In summary, continuing education units have recognized that changes within the American society are initiating the need to develop programs aimed at new audiences with diverse needs and interests. Many of these new audiences will respond to programs and services, if the offerings are designed to meet specific objectives in line with professional and personal goals. The use of interdisciplinary networks should be a vital part of comprehensive strategic marketing to reach diverse groups with varietal needs. The Education Marketing Mix Model described here can be useful as a framework in identifying potential outreach opportunities.

THE EDUCATIONAL MARKETING MIX MODEL



THE MARKETING MIX MODEL WORKSHEET
SAMPLE

Conter/Schneiderman 1981

"Rehabilitation Of The Elderly"

Your Audiences (WHO)	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	PROFESSIONALS	OTHERS
Your Product (WHAT)	Course Credit	In-Service Credit	Recertification	Information
Your Packaging (HOW)	Combination Location, Credit Time, Atmosphere	Combination Location, Credit Time, Duration	Combination Location Validation Duration	Combination Location Information Time
Your Promotion* (WHO, WHAT, HOW)	Announcements Catalogs Campus Newspapers In-Class Announcements	Direct Mail Endorsements Professional Assoc. Word of Mouth	Direct Mail Professional Assoc. Employees Meetings	Newsletters P.S.A.'s Media Referrals
Your Place (WHERE)	Campus	Central Location	Central Location	Convenient Location
Your Price (HOW MUCH)	Part of Tuition	Less Than Benefit Gained	Employer Subsidy	Reasonable Comparable To Other Options
Your Scheduling (WHEN, WHERE)	Multiple Meetings Monday-Friday Daytime	Weekend Intensive One Night Early Evening	Weekend Intensive Weekday Intensive	One Night Weekly Weekend Watch Competition

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